

**THE RETREAT FROM
MONS: BY ONE
WHO SHARED IN IT**

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The Retreat from Mons: By One Who Shared in It by A. Corbett-Smith

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A. CORBETT-SMITH

**THE RETREAT FROM
MONS: BY ONE
WHO SHARED IN IT**



GENERAL SIR H. SMITH-DORRIEN.

From the Painting by Arnold Mouniford.

The Retreat from Mons

BY ONE WHO SHARED IN IT

BY
A. CORBETT-SMITH
(Major, R.F.A.)



With Three Plates and Map

For who is he, whose chin is but enrich'd
With one appearing hair, that will not follow
These cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1916

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To

GENERAL SIR H. L. SMITH-DORBIEN,
G.C.M.G., G.C.B., D.S.O., ETC.

DEAR GENERAL SMITH-DORBIEN,

When, some few months ago, you honoured me by your acceptance of this dedication I had in mind to make a single volume which should trace the course of the War during the period of your command of the Second Army, the unforgettable days from Mons to Ypres.

Since then I have found that there is one phase of the operations which has gripped the imagination of the public more than any other event of the past two years: the "Retreat from Mons." It is, indeed, almost incredible how little the people know of this, and how splendidly they respond to the telling of the story.

But it seems to me that the story can never be told as it should be. Only those who actually experienced the horror and the splendour of those ten days could hope to tell it, and for them the facts are blurred and distorted by the nightmare through which they passed.

Dedication

Still, I am rashly making the attempt, and in doing so I try to write of the big, human side of things. For it is the trivial, homely incidents in the daily life of the British soldier, and the stories of noble devotion and chivalry of gallant gentlemen like Francis Grenfell and Bradbury, which fire the imagination. I know that you will understand and appreciate my motives.

For the rest, should the public be kind to this trivial volume I shall hope later to continue the narrative as I had originally intended.

Will you, then, accept my book, not in tribute of a Command which must remain indelibly scored in letters of gold on the page of our country's history so long as Britain endures, but as a memory of the two or three years of peace when I was privileged to work with you and of the year of war when I had the honour of serving, one of that "band of brothers," in your Command?

I am,

Very faithfully yours,

A. CORBETT-SMITH.

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,
LONDON.

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I have availed myself to some extent of the researches of MR. HILAIRE BELLOC in my estimates in Chapter V.; while my details of the German Army are taken from German sources, "Deutsche Land- und Seemacht," by Rabenau, and other volumes.

To my comrades-in-arms (few, alas! remain), whose deeds and experiences have contributed to the writing of the story, I hold out a hand of greeting. I salute in reverence the immortal souls of the gallant dead.

A. C.-S.

